



SUFISM :

Omar Khayyam and E. Fitzgerald.

BY

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A Sufi Interpretation of Omar Khayyam and Fitzgerald,
etc , etc., etc.

*This is Tassawuf, said Juniyd : that God
should make Thee free from Thyself and
should make Thee live in Him.*

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

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A Sufi Interpretation of Omar Khayyam and Fitzgerald.

Jesus, a Poet, a Prophet, a Mystic and a Man of Freedom.

The Inner Life and the Tao-Teh-King.

Numerous articles on Mysticism, Sufism, Theosophy, etc.,
in Encyclopædias and Magazines, etc., etc.

PREFACE.

THE writings of Omar Khayyam are good specimens of Sufism but are not valued in the West as they ought to be, and the mass of the people know him only through the poems of Edward Fitzgerald which is unfortunate. It is unfortunate because Fitzgerald is not faithful to his master and model, and at times he lays words upon the tongue of the Sufi which are blasphemous. Such outrageous language is that of the eighty-first quatrain for instance. Fitzgerald is doubly guilty because he was more of a Sufi than he was willing to admit.

Wine and Wisdom, Love and Beauty come from the Omarian vineyard, whether we pass through merely for pleasure or we dig down into its soil. Its wisdom leads to salvation. Its wine gives strength. Its refrain is

“Up, ye lovers, and away! 'Tis time to leave the world
for aye.

Hark, loud and clear from heaven the drum of parting
calls—let none delay!”

Omar was a Sufi mystic of the order of Jellalladdin, Attar, Saadi and the other great ones.

* * * *

This book is not a reprint of my earlier one with a title somewhat similar. It may be called a recast. It is much changed and, I trust, improved. In fact it is a new book. Its Interpretations are fuller and closer to the Sufi standard. They have been remodelled and many new thoughts have been added.

A short appreciation of Sufism precedes my Interpretations.

It is with great joy that I have prepared this book for the Sufi Society. May that Society be the means of spreading Sufi Mysticism in the West! I believe that Sufism is not only fitted for the mind and heart of the Occident, but is needed. I have been familiar with it for more than thirty years and have been greatly benefited.

C. H. A. BJERREGAARD.

SUFISM: AN APPRECIATION.

SUFISM may well be called a wonderful system. It is far more than Mohammedan Mysticism. Its Islamism is so broad that all religions, philosophies and arts can and do use its forms, etc.

Its very name suggests universality. If it be Arabic it means "Purity," if it be Persian it means "Wool" and relates to the woollen garments usually worn by Sufis. And, in its signification of "Wool" it also carries a specific symbolic sense, known to occultists; if the word is Greek it has the meaning of "Wisdom." Still other meanings have been given to the word and name; meanings dictated by personal idiosyncrasies or religious inclinations.

For short, one might define Sufism as Mysticism on the ground that it is a practice rather than a theory; an experience rather than a study. Like all other Mysticism its aim and end is "Union with God." It seeks the Real and shuns the mere phenomenal. Sufis call themselves "Followers of the Real," *Ahal-al Haqq*.

God in Sufi conceptions is no mythological idea. No poetic fancy has defined the Sufi ONE:

" The ONE
Distributor of Evil and of Good,
Of Joy and Sorrow, Himself apart from Matter,
In Essence and in Energy—He yet
Hath fashion'd all that is—Material Form
And Spiritual. All from Him—by Him
Directed all " *

* *Jami: Salaman and Absal*, tr. by E. Fitzgerald.

Nor does imagination ordinarily rise to such ascetic heights which makes Union with the Divine Original possible :

“ That Divine
Original, of which the Soul of Man
Darkly possest, by fierce Discipline
At last he disengages from Dust,
And flinging off the baser rags of Sense,
And all in Intellectual Light arrayed,
As Conquerer and King he mounts the Throne,
And wears the Crown of Human Glory
—Whence,
Throne over Throne surmounting, he shall reign
One with the Last and First Intelligence.”*

“This is the meaning of Sufism,
Which to know wholly ponder in Thy Heart,
Till all its ancient Secret be enlarged.”†

Sufism as an historic factor may be traced to a woman, Rabia. Personalities do not count in Mysticism, but it is rather characteristic that a woman should have given the Keys to Sufi emotionalism and Rabia has done that. Sufism has gained thereby, I think.

Another explanation of the historic origin and development of Sufism is given by Sufis. “The seeds of Sufism were sown in the time of Adam, germed in that of Nuh (Noah), and budded in that of Ibrahim (Abraham). It began to develop in the time of Musa (Moses), reached maturity in Isa (Jesus) and produced pure wine in Mohammed.”

Sufism is no historic sect, nor is it doctrinal in purpose. It encourages a “feeling after God,” a “mystery of holiness,” and is thus as universal as possible, for all men seek God. Our Sufi has formulated a creed, if so it may be called: “O God, I never listen to the cry

of animals or to the quivering of trees or to the murmuring of water or to the warbling of birds or to the rustling wind or to the crashing thunder without feeling them to be an evidence of Thy Unity and proof that there is nothing like unto Thee." The sentiment of these words is that of the Inner Life, a genuine Nature-Mysticism. It is Sufism. Similarly Baba Kuhi of Shiraz expressed himself:

"In the market, in the cloister—only God I saw.
 In the valley and on the mountains—only God I saw.
 Him I have seen beside me oft in tribulation;
 In favour and in fortune—only God I saw.
 In prayer and in fasting, in praise and contemplation,
 In the religion of the Prophet—only God I saw.
 Neither soul nor body, accident nor substance,
 Qualities nor causes—only God I saw.
 I opened mine eyes, and by the light of His face around
 me
 In all the eyes discovered—only God I saw.
 Like a candle I was melting in His fire:
 Amidst the flames outflashing—only God I saw.
 Myself with mine own eyes, I saw most clearly,
 But when I looked with God's eyes—only God I saw.
 I passed away into nothingness, I vanished,
 And lo, I was All-living—only God I saw."*

Sufism emphasises more than any other Mysticism that the ONE is Beauty. By so doing it opens rich possibilities for a reconciliation between the Christian sects and the Beautiful, so poorly understood by them, and so often maligned. Art could thrive under that idea.

Sufism does not encourage the senses and their passions, but it realises that the soul "the body's very life doth imbibe the knowledge and delight of things of sense," and he offers that "knowledge and delight of

* Quoted in *The Mystics of Islam* by R. A. Nicholson.

things of sense" to the Beloved, the ONE, as *his worship*. He does not hold "the delights" for himself, he *uses them as means of Adoration*.

The Sufi cultivates Beauty as Worship. And why not? Is he wrong because the Orthodox do not do it, and, because of ignorance, are unable to address God in terms of the Beautiful?

Much of Sufi symbolism is correspondential, and is worship. It appears when he calls God "the Beloved," and finds Him on the red cheeks of beautiful damsels—in sexual love—in wine—in taverns. Such phrases are art to him. The tavern means the call of contemplation; the lips open to the inscrutable mysteries of God's essence. Tresses and curls illustrate expansion and infiniteness. Wine is wisdom.

The Sufi loves song and music. These two are means of Uplift and Adoration. They reach deeper than preaching, and they can touch all hearts and find entry where no word can penetrate. Among the Sufi's musical instruments should be mentioned the flute, because its mysticism is mentioned in one of "The Acts of the Adepts," as narrated in the *Mesnevi* (Redhause's translation). This is the tale.

"One day, it is said, Muhammed recited to Ali in private the secrets and mysteries of the 'Brethren of Sincerity,' enjoining upon him not to divulge them to any of the uninitiated, so that they should not be betrayed; also to yield obedience to the rule of implicit submission.

"For forty days Ali kept the secret in his own sole breast, and bore therewith until he was sick at heart.

"He therefore fled to the open wilderness, and there chanced upon a well. He stooped, reached his head as

far down into the well as he was able; and then, one by one, he confided those mysteries to the bowels of the earth. From the excess of his excitement, his mouth filled with froth and foam. These he spat out into the water of the well, until he had freed himself of the whole, and he felt relieved.

“After a certain number of days a single reed was observed to be growing in that well. It waxed and shot up, until at length a youth, whose heart was miraculously enlightened on the point, became aware of this growing plant, cut it down, drilled holes in it, and began to play upon it airs, similar to those performed by the dervish lovers of God, as he pastured his sheep in the neighbourhood.

“By degrees, the various tribes of Arabs of the desert heard of this flute-playing of the Shepherd, and its fame spread abroad. The camels and the sheep of the whole region would gather round him as he piped, ceasing to pasture that they might listen. From all directions the nomads flocked to hear his strains, going into ecstasies with delight, weeping for joy and pleasure, breaking forth in transports of gratification.

“The rumour at length reached the ears of the Prophet, who gave orders for the piper to be brought before him. When he began to play in the sacred presence, all the holy disciples of God’s messenger were moved to tears and transports, bursting forth with shouts and exclamations of pure bliss, and losing all consciousness. The Prophet declared that the notes of the shepherd’s flute were the interpretation of the holy mysteries he had confided in private to Ali’s charge.

“Thus it is that, until a man acquire the sincere devotion of the linnet-voiced flute-reed, he cannot hear the mysteries of the Brethren of Sincerity in its dulcet

notes, or realise the delights thereof; for 'faith' is altogether a yearning of the heart, and a gratification of the spiritual sense."

Dhun l'Nun, the famous Egyptian Sufi said: "Music is a divine influence which stirs the heart to seek God. Those who listen to it spiritually attain unto God, and those who listen to it sensually fall into unbelief." He also said: "When a Sufi goes into a tavern, the tavern becomes his cell, but when a wine-bibber goes into a cell, that cell becomes his tavern."

INTERPRETATIONS.

SUFISM AS A DOCTRINE OF LIFE.

*[The sequential order follows
E. Fitzgerald's Quatrains.
Fourth Edition.]*

THE Sufi's call in the morning is intense. The Muezzin's call cannot compare with it. The Muezzin's cry is an admonition to ritual prayer, but the Sufi's Wake! destroys illusions and restores spiritual conditions. It heralds the Sun behind the sun: the ONE, who is both named and unnamed.

The devout call the ONE, the Opener, Al-Fattah! And that is profound, because the ONE is also the Life-giver, Al-Mohyi and the Sublime, Al-Muta'ali. The ONE in this Trinity-Call is a cry to the drowsy ones outside: "Why nods the drowsy worshipper outside?" The ONE is Inside, in the Temple, the proper place. Not a temple of stone, but the Temple pointed out by Nanac. A Moslem priest cried out "Base infidel! how dar'st thou turn thy feet towards the house of Allah?"* Nanac answered "And thou—turn them, if thou canst towards any spot where the awful house of God is not!"

It is the ONE, Al-Jami, the Assembler, whose voice calls the Wake! It is Al-Jalil, the Glorious God, who is also Ar-Razzac, the Provider, who leads the caravan. Call the ONE by any of the other ninety-nine names or any other; Allah, the Great, is the Keeper of the Heart, the Tavern and the Guide!

It is the Sufi of the heart who calls Wake! And his call is to the road of Salvation. Wake! and realize the awfulness of a desert where the ONE is absent! The desert of mis-spent lives, unfulfilled vows and discontent. In that desert there is no response. The cry goes wandering from black thoughts through

* Mecca.

weak hearts and does not even find a lodgement in shallow brains. The heart is as empty as waste places. It may cry "Open thou the door!" but the cry has not the heartburn of love, if the ONE is not in it. Even if the Sufi's heart were love, it could not open to a mere semblance of a soul. Ghosts of men cannot associate with the ONE.

Those outside the tavern may call and cry "Open thou the door!" And they may plead that they stay but a little and, once departed, may return no more! "Not being the door themselves, no opening is possible."
(i.-iii.)

* * * *

New Years does not mean reviving of old desires. It means retiring to solitudes and the eternal wells found there; wells which never dry up. New Years means Spring to the Sufi and its place is the heart. And it is of small concern that "David's lips are lockt" and that Iram and Jamshyd's cup are lost. Drawing wine from the eternal wells, the Sufi sings at New Years, "Come, fill the cup! Let the old garments lie where you dropped them; be young in the presence of the Incomparable, Al-Aziz, and the All-Loving Wadud!"

Drink wine! wine? Yes, but not the Zahu-Khush, or "agreeable poison" of Jamshyd's courtlady, but "the wine of God's grace" and from the cup "which hath no brim"; if it has or appears to have a brim, "it is the fault of the cup."

The Sufi is no drunkard, though he calls for wine. He calls for wine, but not that kind which drives wisdom away; nay, he wants that pure and unmixed wine "whose hidden power vanquishes fate"; that wisdom which saves from the burdens of all mistakes; that clear wine which sanctifies the heart; that illuminating

wine which points out the true path ; that pearly wine which purifies the meditative mind and its fancies.

The Sufi justifies his drinking by the poet's song :

“ In drinking wine it is not my desire
To riot, or transgress the law divine ;
No ! to attain unconsciousness of self
Is the sole cause I drink me drunk with wine.

Drunkards are doomed to hell, so men declare,
Believe it not, 'tis but a foolish scare ;
Heaven will be empty as this hand of mine,
If none who loves good drink finds entrance there.”

Still the infidel and the scoffer will not believe the Sufi when he declares that the wine which is the illusion of men, is not the wine he sings about. Wisdom is wine and wine is wisdom.

“ Allah hath promised wine in Paradise,
Why then should wine on earth be deemed a vice ? ”
(iv.-vi.)

* * * *

The Sufi illustrates by a story how all men ask for wine and do so instinctively.

Four travellers, a Persian, an Arab, a Turk and a Greek met at the inn, and decided to have a meal together, and as luxuriously as money could provide it. Each contributed ten paras, all they owned individually. The Persian proposed to buy Inghur ; the Arab, Ineb : the Turk Uzum and the Greek Staphilion. But as they did not understand each other, they did not know what was proposed and were about coming to blows when a peasant, who had understood the various calls, brought them a basket of grapes and explained to them that that was what they wanted, and immediately realised when they saw the grapes. They thought the same thought and had the same desire. In their passion they

did not realise that fundamentally they had wisdom and wanted its earthly symbol. Wisdom is but one.

“Life’s fount is wine; Khizr its guardian,
I, like Elias, find it where I can;
’Tis sustenance for heart and spirit too,
Allah himself calls wine ‘a boon to man.’”

Sufi wine is from Allah’s vats, “the Eternal Saki”;
hence the Sufi declares

“Where have I said that wine is wrong for all?
’Tis lawful for the wise, but not for fools.”

This is Sufi wisdom: “The Cup is the body, and
the soul is the wine.” (vii.-viii.)

* * * *

The Sufi knows that wine opens the heart to Al-Wali, the Beloved, the Rose, God. But those who do not know wine are like the fishes who asked what water was; they had never seen it. This is the legend:

Once upon a time, the fishes in a certain river came together in council, and someone among them said: “They tell us that our life is from the water, but we do not know what it is and where it is. But we may learn wisdom if we travel to the great sea and find a very wise fish which lives there and which can tell us what water is. Let us travel to the great sea and ask the wise fish.” And so they did and they found the wise fish and propounded the question. As a reply they received the following answer:

“O ye who seek to solve the Knot!
Ye live in God, yet know Him not.
Ye sit upon the river’s brink,
Yet crave in vain a drop to drink.
Ye dwell beside a countless store,
Yet perish hungry at the door.”

Wine is the great sea, and the wise fish is Love.

Love on land has an emblem in the rose. There are two kinds of roses in the world. One is of Spring and leaves by Summer. The nightingale loves that rose more than any other flower. It rouses his amorous longings and intoxicates him. Its thorns often penetrate his bleeding breast; yet he sings best when wounded. The Sufi also loves that rose. Still you may hear him sarcastically ask: "Where is the rose of yesterday?"

The Sufi knows also another rose. Yesterday's rose is subject to transmutation, but the other rose is the Rose of Mystery. The planets borrowed their curves from it. Its stamens and pistils are shaped like the fingers of the Beloved. That rose is the Sufi's cup of blessedness. In it he finds the Divine Presence. It is not far from him. It is found in the Garden of the Beloved. (ix.)

* * * *

Let the Infidel forget Kaikobad and declare him but a name! The Sufi measures greatness by another staff than the chronicler. His measuring rod is adapted to greatness in wisdom and its scales read off moral values. The world's meter reads time and space and does not reach beyond life's desert lines.

It is also true that Kaikhosm left Shirin and that Zal and Rushum are legendary heroes, but all such knowledge is nothing compared with the Sufi's wisdom of Malik-Ul-Mulk, the King of Kings, and who is giver of both life and death, Al-Mohyi and Al-Mumit. (x.)

* * * *

The Sufi knows perfectly well that a "strip of herbage just divides the desert from the sown," or that

Life and Death are neighbours. But why should he fear a change from the one to the other? He knows THAT which is beyond both. His teachers and his own heart have taught him that "The Only Agent" is there, and, moreover he has realized that "Love is all there is." He has said it many times and repeats it daily, "Whatsoever instrument He makes of me, that I am." He is a true Moslem, a "resigned one," because he is a Lover and because "resignation hurries the soul along 'the path of re-union.'" Resignation does not make him a fatalist. "The instinct of the soul protesteth against fatalism as an error."

Death is to the Sufi a means to the expected "Union." Hence he receives Death with a smile and a greeting of welcome. This doctrine is found in the *Mesnevi*:

"Death, that dread thing of which all mankind
Is laughed and mocked at by saints ^{stand in fear,} when it
draws near."

The dew drop did not perish,

"But, in a shell received, that drop of dew
Into a pearl of marvellous beauty grew."

When the pearl was taken from the shell, which the diver had torn from the ocean's bosom, it came to even greater glory than before, it "came to gleam, chief jewel in a monarch's diadem."

The academic critic is blind and ignorant of Nature's law. He does not know the value of the body. The mystic tale is this that when the earth refused to furnish material for a body for Adam, Israfil, the Angel of Death, loaned Gabriel and Michael parts of himself for the Adamic body. According to his own law, Israfil

takes back the loan, or, to put it in other language
 "everything returns to its source."

Sufism teaches

"Death's terrors spring from baseless phantasy;
 Death yields the tree of immortality;
 Since Isa breathed new life into my soul,
Eternal Death has washed its hands of me."

Isa is the Christ. The Christ life is but another
 name for the *immortal* life. (xi.)

* * * *

The Sufi knows the phenomenal world to be a mere
 shadow, and faith shows it to be vanity. It is to him a
 mere wilderness; but a wilderness has no terrors for
 him. The Tuba tree transforms it for him even to a
 paradise. That tree sends a branch into every Believer's
 home; its scent "is the breath of eternity"; its "flowers
 have a soul in every leaf." With a "book of verses"
 from the Beloved; with "bread and wine," ye "heaven
 and earth

—and *Thou*

Beside me singing in the wilderness,"

why should the Sufi not declare himself happy? (xii.)

* * * *

It is, as the poet sings "sown for the glories of this
 world, and some sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to
 come." "The worldly hope men set their hearts upon
 turns to ashes" for some. "Or it prospers" for others.
 The Sufi knows that and not merely as a doctrine
 derived from others; he knows it as an experience.
 Experience makes a Sufi.

Having drawn wisdom from Wine, or the Inner
 Life, the Sufi knows that "in a little hour or two" it is

all gone, because this world, which man makes, is Non-Existent. It is so the will of Allah. Some are so deaf that they even do not hear or "heed the rumble of a distant drum" to join the caravan which is "on the way to God." Some others misjudge the nature of "this batter'd caravanserai." It is only for a short stop on the journey for Sarab, Wine, Divine Love, Life of the Heart.

The Sufi spurns the worldling's idea to "take the cash and let the credit go," and to pay no attention to the rumble of the drum which starts the caravan, be the journey to the land of the Heart or the desert of Death. Such indifference is false living, and as disastrous as to live on credit in this world.

The Sufi demands Truth of Life and that can be learned from the rose, which blows as richly for the poor as for the rich. The rose's perfume is not different in the infidel's garden, and that of the believer or the Sufi. Love is always Love.

By the Sufi everything is done *sub rosa*, that is to say under the eyes of the Beloved, God.

The Sufi is always giving out power like the Rose. He is seminal. He who husbands is not so rich as he who gives. Giving is getting; holding is losing. The mystery is understood when we realise that we are "coming to be," rather than bring. Love understands this. (xiii.-xvi.)



The Sufi does not indulge the frivolities of the inns or caravanserais on the route. He knows them and the dangers they hide, as well as their allurements. He realises the discomfort of travelling, but he does not complain. He is a traveller who seeks God, not pleasure, dissipation or relief from a torturing conscience.

He is both a Salik and a Talib, a traveller and a searcher after God.

The Sufi is the Lover, Ashik, and God is the Beloved, M'ashuk. The two travel together and having the artistic soul he can understand what the Beloved shows him; both the personal beauties and the "batter'd caravanserai"; both day and night and their mysteries of Love and Beauty. These revelations are more to him than to the travelling merchant, because he has drunk deep of the Beloved's wine.

The Sufi does not become a pessimist or infidel because "the lion and the lizard keep courts where Jemshyd gloried and drank deep." Why should he despair because "the wild ass stamps" over the head of Bahram, "that great hunter," but "cannot break his sleep." Such knowledge is only a *memento meri* to him. Very likely Jemshyd and Bahram sleep a sleep from which there is no awakening. If they did not drink Wisdom-Wine, what is there to awaken them?

The drunkard and the voluptuary see the scythe that cuts the crops, but they do not see the Master of the Harvest pass through the fields. They see the see-saw of things, but they were never players. They were only spectators of their own acts, hence they are ignorant of the ONE and of an Awakening in the ONE.

(xvii.-xviii.)

* * * *

If Omar's poet had only known the full meaning of his verse: "Ah, my Beloved, fill the cup that clears to-day of past regret and future fears," he would not have felt gloomy because to-morrow he might be among "yesterday's sev'n thousand years" and the indefinite. The Beloved whom he addressed was earthliness and

the cup he drained held no divine ambrosia; its juice was a "delicious poison."

The Sufi knows that Jemshyd's seven-ringed cup illustrates a divine mystery: the world as God's image reflected. The "whole heaven" is His body; "the first intelligence" is His soul; "the breath of the whole" is His heart; "the spirits of the seven planets and all the stars" are "His powers." The world is conscious and living, and the Sufi is a conscious member of that mystery. Omar's poet knew a little of that mystery and revealed it when he sang

"I sometimes think that never blows so red
The rose as where some buried Cæsar bled."

The Sufi is a man of Wholeness. He reads God's thought not merely in parts, but in the Whole. Hence, the Sufi is a perfect type of "the nature of all things." He is not arrogant because he thinks perfection. He points to the flower which only gradually unfolds "the nature of all things," but nevertheless has the eyes of the sun, the sentiments of the moon and the aloftness of the stars. The flower's thoughts follow the tides of the Eternal Heart, and its perfume throbs in rhythm with the Eternal Pulse. He is a flower in the garden of the Beloved.

The Sufi has a will, strong as the ages, and, the cycles of Eternity are models for his aspirations; but he is stronger than they.

Wisdom-Wine opens the Sufi's eye to the infinitely small as well as to the infinitely large. An atom holds a world. He knows that, because he has cleft it. The birds are his sisters and the reptiles are his brothers. He lives in fellow feeling with all the world, dead and alive.

The Sufi is a poet and the poet's poet. Beauty is

his ideal and the power of his song, because Beauty is the Key to the universe. Hear a Sufi poet :

“ Praise to the Lord of all the universe !

Each speck of matter did He constitute
A mirror, causing each one to reflect
The beauty of His visage. From the rose
Flashed forth His beauty, and the nightingale
Beholding it, loved madly. From that fire
The candle drew the lustre which beguiles
The moth to immolation. On the sun
His beauty shone, and straightway from the wave
The lotus reared its head. Each shining lock
Of Laili's hair attracted Majnun's heart
Because some ray divine reflected shone
In her fair face. 'Twas He to Shirin's lips
Who lent that sweetness which had power to steal
The heart from Parviz, and from Farhad life.
His Beauty everywhere doth show itself,
And through the forms of earthly beauties shines
Obscured as through a veil. He did reveal
His face through Joseph's coat, and so destroyed
Zuleikha's peace. Where'er thou seest a veil,
Beneath that veil He hides. Whatever heart
Doth yield to love, He charms it. In His love
The heart hath life. Longing for Him, the soul
Hath victory. That heart which seems to love
The fair ones of this world loves Him alone.
Beware ! say not, ' He is All-Beautiful,
And we His lovers ! ' Thou art but the glass,
And He the face confronting it, which casts
Its image in the mirror. He alone
Is manifest, and Thou in truth art hid.
Pure love, like beauty, coming but from Him
Reveals itself in thee. If steadfastly
Thou canst regard, thou wilt at length perceive
He is the mirror also ; He alike
The Treasure and the Casket. ' I ' and ' Thou '
Have here no place, and are but phantasies
Vain and unreal. Silener ! for this tale
Is endless, and no eloquence hath power
To speak of Him. 'Tis best for us to love
And suffer silently, being as nought—”

The Sufi has learned his lessons in art too well not to know what curves in Nature's architecture and anatomy mean; or, to ignore the eloquence of the curly hair of his beloved dame, or the color of her eyes and cheek. Such expressions fill his Book of Art, and, shafts of light fly from his poetry. (xix-xxi.)

* * * *

“Ourselves must we beneath the couch
of earth descend?”

Certainly! Why not? Let us laugh or cry! What is the difference? The point to realise is that life is in the main a torrent rushing beneath the bridge on which we stand. The bridge is our individuality and the torrent is the mutation of things. The stream is not in our power; it is neither good or bad, but indifferent.

It is as Pascal said: “Man is but a reed, weakest in Nature, but the reed which thinks. Were the Universe to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which has slain him, because he knows that he dies. The Universe knows nothing of this.”

The thinking being is above and superior to blind forces and rushes of energy. (xxii.-xxiii.)

* * * *

The Sufi wants to be generous and joyously he makes a couch for others and he can well agree with the winedrinker to

“Make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the dust descend.”

But he “spends” differently than the hopeless and the pessimist. He spends his energies to realise his own dignity as Man.

“Man, what thou art is hidden from thyself ;
 Know'st not that morning, mid-day, and the eve
 Are all within thee ! The ninth heaven art thou ;
 And from the spheres into the roar of time
 Didst fall ere-while ; thou art the brush that painted
 The hues of all the world,—the light of life
 That ranged its glory in the Nothingness.”

The Sufi's aim is that dignity. “He buys the next world with this.” He exchanges the Nothing for Being.

The Sufi also agrees with the drunkards that he shall descend

“Dust into dust, and under dust, to lie,
 Sans wine, sans song, sans singer, and—sans end !”

But here again he differs from the infidel. That part of him which is to lie in the dust is not truly himself, but only something borrowed.

The Sufi, Shamzi of Tabritz, explains his true end :—

“I am not of Nature's min, nor of the circling heavens—
 My place is the placeless ; my trace is the traceless ;
 'Tis neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of
 the Beloved.”

And all Sufis exclaim with one voice

“This life, that heaven hath lent me for awhile,
 I will pay back, when it is time to pay.”

When the Sufi has paid his tribute to “the way of manifestation,” he arises into where there is neither “I” nor “Thou.” (xxiv.)

* * * *

The Sufi is not afraid of strong language. He condemns the drunkards, those who drink the juice of “birth and death” only : “Fools ! your reward is neither here nor there !” No reward can be coming ! The next “place” or “the future,” to speak in terms of space and time, can hold no rewards for those who have

never been sober enough to see Truth, or free enough to perceive Beauty, or unselfish enough to do good. "Saints and Sages," who are but "foolish prophets" discuss the subject of "rewards." The Sufi does not. He lives on the heights of vision; they stay in deep cellars shutting out light and air by intellectual screens.

By intellect alone "we come out of the same door that we go in by." By intellect alone we never ascend in the house, the House of God. Even they who rise to the "throne of Saturn," the prince of desire, cannot solve "the master-knot of human fate." Sufi, Love, Beauty and Rhythm master everything and everywhere.

(xxv.-xxvii.)



Those who graduate from the schools of learning realise sooner or later "I came like water, and like wind I go." The teacher revealed no finality. They, themselves, never awakened to an answer to the questions why? whence? whither? "Like water willy-nilly flowing" they can quench no thirst of soul, though they may drive the mills of the Superior Man. They may be as "winds along the waste," raising dust and destruction, but they can never make safe and sure foundations out of shifting sands. Their habitat is the desert and they make deserts. Learning withers the soul. They are emptiness and that blasphemy which comes from psychic spheres, crying:

" . . . without asking, hither hurried whence?
And without asking, whither hurried hence?"

The Sufi cries: let go the flesh, the understanding and volition, too—"abide in truth!" But he is patient and forbearing. Maybe the Magus has risen

"Up from earth's centre through the seventh gate."

But, surely he has come back no wiser if he did not find the Beloved. Reality is not seen in smoke-woven pictures; nor does the ONE appear in the shadow plays of psychism. (xxviii.-xxxi.)

* * * *

Some veils reveal; others hide. The Sufi knows them. The "Thee" and the "Me" are veils which hide. When there is no more of "Thee" and "Me" the mystery may be revealed. Behind the "Thee" and the "Me" lies the mystery of the "We,"—Unity. As long as the pilgrim asked admission to Paradise and spoke of himself as "I," the door remained closed and no answer was made to his request for admission; so the legend tells. But, when he returned after thousands of years of solitary sufferings, and mentioned "we," the door opened immediately.

"Unity," which is the mystery of "we," unravels the "master-knot of human fate," and by it we can read the tablets of creation and drink long and freely from the "eternal wells" which flow with wisdom-wine and never dry up. "Unity" is a veil which reveals.

The nightingale and his song taken separately is a veil which hides. The rose, the thorn and the bleeding breast separated from "Unity" are merely parts of Manifoldness, and veiled. The Mystic can remove the veil, and, only he.

The Sufi has discovered in his own heart that "Nature is a kind of illuminated table of the contents of the Spirit," hence he knows the language of the seas, the mountains, the heavens and all there is and was and shall be. The universal name for that language is Love. The best grammar is written by the heart.

(xxxii.-xxxiv.)

Conscience is "Unity." Said Shamsi Tabritz :

"The Centre is within me, and its wonder
Lies as a centre everywhere about me."

In that "Centre" the Sufi knows who He is, and, that "angel and beast Man's wondrous leaven compose." The Sufi therefore may learn from "a poor earthen urn" and draw out its secrets.

The secret also lies in the Cup. The sot drinks from his cup and thirsts again. And the time comes when he shall neither thirst nor drink, nor, even ask for a drink. The Sufi also drinks from a cup and one drink quenches all his thirst. That drink is both substance and plan. When the building is finished, the plan is revealed and its phenomenal shape is needed no more. Its idea is one with the building and the building is one with it. (xxxv.-xxxvi.)

* * * *

Attar's name is given to the richest and sweetest perfume extracted from the petals of roses. Attar was a representative of Persian Sufism.

A story about a potter's clay has rolled from of old down man's successive generations. When the potter thumped his wet clay it murmured: "Gently, Brother, Gently, pray!" Attar first of all told that story and since it is flavoured with bitter-sweet mortality, I will tell it again :

"One day the Prophet on a river bank,
Dipping his lips into the channel, drank
A draught as sweet as honey. Then there came
One who an earthen pitcher from the same
Drew up, and drank; and after some short stay
Under the shadow, rose and went his way,
Leaving his earthen bowl. In which, anew
Thirsting, the Prophet from the river drew,

And drank from. But the water that came up
 Sweet from the stream, drank bitter from the cup.
 At which the Prophet in a still surprise
 For answer turning up to heav'n his eyes.
 The vessel's earth'n lips with answer ran :
 ' This clay that I am made of once was Man,
 Who dying, and resolved into the same
 Obliterated earth from which he came,
 Was for the potter dug, and chased in turn
 Through long vicissitudes of bowl and urn,
 But howsoever moulded, still the pain
 Of that first mortal anguish would retain,
 And cast, and re-cast, for a thousand years
 Would turn the sweetest water into tears.' "

(xxxvii.-xxxviii.)

* * * *

The Sufi does not teach re-incarnation. He regenerates, but does not re-incarnate. Because he discards the laws of cause and effect as purely time questions and as not belonging to Being, he discards the re-incarnation theory as an unnecessary theory. The problems of life and death, birth and death, cause and effect, belong to an unjustified and unproved doctrine. Re-incarnation presupposes an inexorable law, which our daily life disproves. Contrary to the claims of the re-incarnationists, life does show mercy and most people's life experience proves that they are not subject to a cruel law they cannot escape. Whether they know it clearly or not, they have experienced that Love is the law of Life. Love is all there is. Love or compassion in all forms can be shown to be at least as prominent a law as iron-hard Necessity. The Sufi asserts that Love is the fundamental order of the Universe.

Tesawuf is not re-incarnation ; it is regeneration or unfoldment, and, since time and space conceptions are no more than illusions, they do not enter into

re-generations. *Fana* is not extinction, it is the consummation of the "journey to God"; it is transmutation and ascension. The Sufi's life is self-unfoldment, the perfection in Love. Thus declared the *Mesnevi*:

"From the moment you came into the world of being
A ladder was placed before you that you might escape.
First you were mineral; later you turned to plant,
Then you became animal: how should this be a secret
to you?

Afterwards you were made man, with knowledge,
reason, faith;

* * * *

When you have travelled on from man, you will
doubtless become an angel;
After that you are done with this earth, your station
is in heaven.

Pass again even from angelhood: enter that ocean!
Through it all you are and you remain You."

Walking in the garden of the Beloved, the Sufi opens his bosom, like the tulip, to "the morning sun." In the morning both lift up their eyes to the "turkis-vaulted dome of the sky" to be united with the Supreme Intelligence which moulded both. When sunshine and cool breezes in the morning wash the sleep off the earth's eyes, they both "utter speech" and reverberate with the brotherhood idea, the passion which binds all the worlds in "Unity." When the day is born, the eye of Glory triumphs in the firmament; the stars hide themselves away and the tulip and the Sufi hoist their flag of allegiance, their brightest colours, and sing for joy. This is just after an hour of silence, immediately before day. In that hour of silence new-born innocence comes into the world. It is baptised in dew and may be communed with in the Love of the Inner Life.

(xxxix.-xl.)

After prayer the Sufi is "perplexed no more with Human or Divine." Prayer is conversation with the Beloved and is never an asking. Lovers never ask. They give. They praise and give thanks. They empty the cup, but never wrangle about truth. They enjoy the beauty of creation: that is their religion! What else could be religion? Religion is the enfoldment of God and His world in the Lover's embrace. Enfoldment means understanding in wisdom and nobleness of purpose. Hence no perplexity.

If the restless one ask:

"And if the wine you drink, the lip you press
End in what All begins and ends in—"

then the Sufi answers that he cultivates them ceremoniously for the sake of universal religion and that he does not dare to neglect them. He has said often and repeats it again that he is not afraid to meet "the angel of the darker drink." He knows as well as other mystics that Darkness is an attribute of the ONE. It means that there is no distinctions in the ONE, the Beloved. It means that the Angel of Darkness is the ONE HIMSELF, who is beyond day and night, beyond the first and the last. But He is not an Unknown. The Sufi and He are of one family. And His "Hereafter" is no place where shades frighten each other or chase bloodless ghosts. His "Hereafter" always was and never was not, nor has it place or abode. It is "Unity."
(xli.-xliii.)

* * * *

The Sufi is not troubled by intellectual distinctions. Being familiar with the mysteries of veils, he can appreciate a curve, be it the lover's tresses or any other curvature. Besides the reality revealed, he indulges in

art and symbolism. The flameshaped cypress uplifts him by its erect form. Even the dust is pastoral and the change from day to day is prophetic.

But symbolism is of small account when he realises that Truth is naked. He will not delay, linger and wait in the tavern when the Outside or the Open is in deshabille, in the state of Nature. Why should he? He is no irrational ascetic ashamed of his bodily appearance or his earthly tabernacle. He is right when he sings "I am the brick, the mortar, the builder, and his plan."

He is built after the law of four foldness and cannot express beauty except by his body; this body is the mirror in which he exhibits loveliness, strength, perfection and riches.

All beauty is personal. It is essentially Divine-Human and Human-Divine. The Sufi is the world's æsthetician *par excellence*. The studio, or the body and the study. The body is his museum of models. And yet the body is only a stopping place in the pilgrimage.
(xliv.-xlvi.)

* * * *

The Sufi is no more bound than any other wise man to answer all questions. Not only are numerous questions idle but unnecessary. I may ask why I did not meet my soul-mate yesterday, when I wanted her, as I thought. My question has been answered by the fact that I did not meet her. Facts are the Logos in operation. The Sufi may answer silly or unnecessary questions by the conventional "I do not know"! That answer does not necessarily declare him ignorant of the mysteries, as the scoffer may think. If the questions were accompanied by life-facts, the Sufi would have no difficulty in pointing out the Divine Wisdom hidden

from the fool and unrecognisable by him. The Sufi is also justified in answering questions by laying his finger upon his lips, bidding silence to the insincere and curious. The Sufi is neither a sophist nor a hypocrite.

Instead of wasting energy upon triflers, the Sufi likes to retire and observe the workings of the Divine Spouse. A pebble can entertain him. To him it is full of heavenliness. He thinks like Jacob Böhme did, that a stone is "God minus warmth." The geologist is right, he thinks, that the stone came into existence as a result of the passionate fight between water and fire, when the earth was yet too young to remember it. Poets can hear pebbles moan when the ocean rages on the shore and they interpret the moans as reminiscences from the time before light was, and, the pebbles were living forces in the primitive chaos. The Sufi likes to throw a stone into a lake and observe the concentric circles generated and move into the circumference, an indefinite purpose which however seems to continue endlessly, if not checked by an interfering object, such as, for instance, the shore of the lake. Surely the pebble is No-thing, yet Some-thing. Something insignificant, yet able to start world motions. The Sufi prefers to meditate upon such phenomena; they lead to Contemplation or the Beholding of the Beloved. His thoughts move from the ONE to the Many, and from the Many to the ONE. His energy is in that way occupied with Being and Not-Being, and his heart's deep-tuned chords give existence to the Divine. He becomes a creator.

The deep tune may be but

"A moment's halt—a momentary task
Of Being . . ."

but in that moment the Sufi *perceives* the Eternal Life.

That moment is not of time nor measured by the hand of the clock. It is a sudden inrush of Reality. It is an opening up inwards. It is an "indivisible point" yet of inward dimensions unknown to mathematics. The realisation or experience of such a moment compensates the Sufi, and any other Mystic, for the loss of time and space values and all that which the senses enjoy.

(xlvii.-xlix.)

* * * *

The "momentary taste" of the Presence is a communion with the Beloved. The Sufi calls it a "pastime of eternity," and looks upon it as a drama which runs "through creation's veins," and he is happy. He will never, nor can he ever, see that drama as contrived and enacted by the Beloved for Himself alone. The Beloved is not self-seeking in His outgoing. His Presence is not the lion's den in which all trails end and none are emerging.

The "momentary taste" opens a "Well amidst the Waste"; it awakens the Master and his Treasure-house.

The Sufi candidate can and will wait all his earthly life for the "momentary taste" and will never in despair commit suicide, thinking thereby to attain his desire. Perhaps it is true that "a hair divides the false and the true," and if it were, a negation like suicide could not bridge that divide.

(l.-lii.)

* * * *

The "momentary taste" manifests that which the *Gulshan I Raz* declares to be "the secret Presence":

"I am the spirit of the grape, the wine press and its juice;
The guest, the host, the crystal cup that shineth in His hall."

How could the singer who represents Omar dare to call out to us: "Oh! make haste!" to quit this dust existence. Does he perhaps call to a Wisdom-Wine conference? Let us take it that way. To-day is the accepted hour! (liii.-liv.)

* * * *

The Sufi candidate passes into the Truth when he divorces "old barren reason" from his bed and takes "the daughter of the vine to spouse"—love and beauty! That daughter is "life's pure elixir," and she leads him into the "trance divine."

The Sufi candidate may begin in the senses, but soon he discards them by this declaration: "Our senses barren are; they come from barren soil." But as he progresses he learns to value the senses as so many roads to "the spacious land of God." The roads are not "the spacious land of God," but lead to it. So the senses, they are not finalities, but means to ends.

(lv.-lvi.)

* * * *

The Sufi does not recognise the astronomical or social calendars. Why should he? They divide time for those who do not know time and who are satisfied to be score marks for their own or other's foolish acts. Such people do not know the Now—they live in the past or the future, which means that they do not live at all.

The Sufi is himself a Calendar and not only of the Now, but of the Beloved's visits to his heart. To be a Calendar does not make him a time-piece, a dial, or a pendulum swinging from Being to Not-being and back again. The Sufi is a Calendar in this way:

"From all eternity, the figures of all things
Unnumbered, multitudinous, gleam in his heart's
wings."

Says the Sufi, "Seek not the Kaaba, rather seek a heart"—because "at each moment it records fresh beauty's train." (lvii.)

* * * *

The Sufi cultivates "that grape which can with Logic absolute, The two-and-seventy jarring sects confute." He is a Logos-man and angels bring him "the imperial bowl," full of "the juice of God." They master "the sovereign alchemist" who transmutes lead into gold. Another name for that alchemist is "the cup that clears To-day of past regret and future fears." Still another name is Wisdom-Wine, or, which is the same as Wine-Wisdom; under either form the grape is an "Allah-breathing Lord." The Sufi has no real "regret and future fears" because "Wine, tasteless and odourless, washes away the writing on the tablet of being." Regrets and fears are winter-garments. "In the fire of Spring," the Sufi flings them away and becomes young. (lvii.-lix.)

* * * *

"Purge yourself from affirmations and negations," says the *Gulsham I Raz*, then the wine can affect you. Drink Isa's cup and come out of the tangled webs of wilfulness and the wilds of selfishness. In that cup you may find yourself. Your image is in it. Drink wine, and sleep that sleep the Cupbearer brings with it. That sleep is an awakening to the control of the world.

Wine, that "Allah-breathing Lord":

"Taverns have been edified by His lips,
Mosques have been illumined by His cheek."

Shabisham confesses :

“All my desire has been accomplished through Him ;
Through Him I gained deliverance from infidel lust.
My heart was hid from knowledge of itself by a
hundred veils,
By pride and vanity and self-deceit and illusion.—
That fair idol entered my room at early morn
And awakened me from the sleep of negligence.
By His face the secret chamber of my soul was
illuminated,
Thereby I saw what I myself really am.”
(lx.-lxi.)

* * * *

Why should the Sufi care about the “threats of hell and hopes of paradise”? He does not want either. The Beloved is the Faithful, yea Momin is His Name! And He is Wadud, the All-Loving! The Sufi takes no notice of the infidel’s complaint :

“No one returns to tell us of the road,
Which to discover we must travel too.”

He knows of no roads in the Beloved’s kingdom because there are no distances in it. It is all ONE. Talks of space are ravings of learning and the Doctor’s play with fictions. Many Sufis have told us :

“I sent my soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And by and by my Soul return’d to me,
And answer’d, ‘I myself am Heav’n and Hell!’”
(lxii.-lxiv.)

* * * *

Common observation maintains that “the flower that once has blown for ever dies.” As a sensuous fact it is true, but it is not true according to the Sufi’s understanding.

To all appearance the flower is gone, but its aroma lingers and that is the soul of the flower; the petals and stamens are the nerve forces which convoy the aroma to my soul: soul to soul. After they have convoyed the ships, the convoys sail away. The petals and stamens are convoys only. The ignorant call them the flower.

Yesterday is part of to-day. My Beloved is the same to-day as yesterday, though yesterday a maiden, to-day a matron. The aroma of yesterday is enhanced by the breath of the matron, the motherhood of God and Futurity.

Where is that individuality, the ignorant talks about? What is it? Who can define it? Where does it begin and where does it end? Even pushing his search back, and, back of the microscope, the unbeliever cannot find it. It is constantly only an appearance, an unreality. Everywhere the searcher finds the ONE in the Many.

The ungodly and self-assertive know no world larger than that of the worms in the pond. They never ascend the mountains. No Alpine air ever expands their lungs, nor do their eyes behold the azure air on the Heights, that blue of the heavens, which has the power to lift the body off its feet.

Nature is to the Sufi a background for his visions. He perceives innumerable eyes everywhere and sees swarming intelligences. They are the Monads which make up the world, the throne of God. They are not of shapes known or unknown to men and they are imperishable. They may occasionally appear to man, and are like man though they are "trailing clouds of glory." They are sometimes called "powers and principalities." Whatever they do, they are indivisible entities. They are naked

spirits, but known to the Sufi. The unbelievers cannot comprehend this. (lxv.-lxvii.)

* * * *

The Sufi will not listen or believe when you tell him that the Beloved is "the master of the show" and that we are only "magic shadow-shapes that come and go." To think so is a result of delusions. The ignorant and the stupid believe that it is the land which moves when it really is the ship on which they are for the time being. Thus it is only appearances which cause the conception that we are unfree beings, balls thrown hither and thither, "helpless pieces of the game He plays."

We are travellers and the Persian proverb says *Gurbat Kurbatasts*, "travel is travail"—but our travelling is not from one geographic place to another, it is the giving birth to the New Man and that is a "travail." No man was ever born without the shedding of blood. (lxviii.-lxx.)

* * * *

Sufism teaches that "the way of manifestations" moves among "opposites." It moves between "Evil" and "Good," though these are not true "opposites." They are "primeval twins," the old Parsees thought. The Sufi therefore frequently uses symbols as means of expression. Said *Omar* in the language of his poet

"I never drank of joy's sweet cordial
But grief's fell hand infused a drop of gall;
Nor dipped my bread in pleasure's piquant salt,
But briny sorrow made me smart withall."

It is especially to candidates for initiation that this lesson of opposites is given. Till they ignore the wormwood, they are not ready for initiation. Till they

have ceased laughing and weeping they cannot see "the everlasting arms" underneath the manifestations. (lxxi.)

* * * *

The Sufi is bound for heaven, but not for "that inverted bowl" they call the sky. The horizon is not his heaven nor any space round about. He steers for the No-Where, which is the Every-Where. He is both the ship and the helmsman. Drink and look upon yourself:

"By God, when you behold your own beauty in the
mirror
You will be the idol of yourself, you will not pass over
to another." (lxxii.)

* * * *

The Sufi does not object to the philosophical discussions about cause and effect. He even nods assent. Why not? Admitting the reality of the phenomenal world, the conclusions as to cause and effect follow by necessity. Such reasoning belongs to the "Way of Manifestation." But the Sufi is not of that Way. He is above it and more. There is a profound meaning in his triumphant song

"Of my base metal may be filed a key /
That shall unlock the door."

A Dervish is not always a Sufi. He is often no more than a fool, a howling fool, and cannot understand alchemy. If he cannot understand that the Inn, the Innkeeper and Light are one, then he is no Dervish, but only a religious mendicant. He is a Dervish who has left the world; but he is a beggar whom the world ignores.

The Sufi has brought the wine with him from "the eternal home" and gets more from thence. Isa is that

wine. Before the Prophet's time that wine was "the longing of the ages." The mystics have found the sources whence to draw that wine, and they give it to all who thirst for immortality. It is a custom to speak about wine, but some say Truth, and, the wise say that the terms mean the same. Some, who know, say that Isa's wine cup is never empty, and cannot be emptied. It is with this cup as with a flame. You may light a thousand from one, but the original flame never grows less for it. Believers also say that the more you drink, the richer it flows. He who drinks Isa's wine becomes a Kutub, a "pivot of the world." (lxxiii.-lxxv.)

* * * *

Shabisham, the Sufi, wrote over his door :

"Did ever one learn knowledge from the dead?
Was ever lamp lighted from ashes?
For this cause my mind is resolved on this,
To gird my loins with the Magician's girdle."

The Magician's girdle is the vine. Certainly! The occult in the orb and cycle is explained by the circling lines of the vine and the juices of its grape. It holds "the line of beauty," and thereby a heavenly passion and bright light. Its curves hold infinite love and the creative power of life. When our loins are girdled by it we become artists and orators. Its persuasive power is irresistible. It shows life and existence in glories unknown. The vine and the girdle have the power of revelation. The Sufi also declared, "the knotted girdle is the emblem of obedience." It is therefore that he advises his disciples :

"Cast away vain tales, and mystic states and visions,
Dreams of light and marvels of miracles.
Your miracles are comprised in Truth-worship.
All beside is pride, vainglory and illusion of existence."

Thus the Sufi places psychic phenomena below "Truth-worship." They do not perfect. They entertain. But by Truth, by the circling vine and "the knotted girdle" we become equals to Khizr, "the green man," he who drank "the waters of life." Who shall also know why the heavens are whirling around themselves in oppositions and conjunctions, always "confessing the rule of the Master." And, moreover, it is said in the *Gulsham I Raz* :

"Behold the world entirely comprised in yourself:
You are the kernel of the world in the midst thereof.
Know yourself that you are the world's soul."

(lxxvi.-lxxvii.)

* * * *

Iblis is the Wicked one, the Profligate. He is that distrustfulness which lingers on the minds of many and is difficult to drive out of the crevices of the brain. He it is which framed the thoughts that God called us out of, "senseless Nothing," and beset our road "with pitfall and with gin," only to condemn us to "everlasting penalties." The Beloved, God, of course never did do that or could do it! Iblis causes those shadows and illusions which betray us. No "everlasting penalties" are heaped upon "helpless creatures." Breaking the law unconsciously only keeps us longer on the road. We stay till we overcome our carelessness. The stay is for correction and perfection.

"My words are dark, but I cannot unfold
The secrets of the 'station' where I dwell."

(lxxviii.-lxxx.)

Omar's poet, Fitzgerald, committed a grievous sin when he framed the eighty-first quatrain about God taking man's forgiveness.

No Sufi could ever be guilty of such blasphemy. Sufism is never profane.

* * * *

The Sufi is silent !
He concentrates, that his power
may lift the burden of profanation caused
by so much sin !

* * * *

After silence comes Ramazan. The fast is called Raza or expiation. In seclusion, 'Itiqvaf, the pious suffer for the impious.

The Potter's house is full of "shapes of all sorts and sizes, great and small." Great is the loquacity. The wise man does not force silence. The pots may "find themselves" by declaring themselves. And the wise may learn wisdom even from fools and simpletons. "Whoso seeketh wisdom shall have no great travail: for he shall find her sitting at his door." "Wisdom is the worker of all things." She is in every inn. Get wisdom and you are safe.

"With treasures in our sleeves, with empty purse,
We, though road dust, reflect the Universe."

Hafiz put it that way and he was a great professor in Wine-Wisdom; Wisdom-Wine. (lxxxiii-lxxxv.)

* * * *

Our pot complained :

"They sneer at us for leaning all awry :
What? did the Hand then of the Potter shake?"

Nay, the pot did not lament the fate or the shape. The Sufi is a model in satisfaction with things as they are or coming to be. Because

"Each speck of matter did He constitute
A mirror, causing each one to reflect
The beauty of His visage
His beauty everywhere doth show itself,
And through the forms of earthly beauties shines
Obscured as through a veil."

No matter if the Sufi finds himself "ungainly" or not. Love and Wisdom make the soul express eternal Beauty. "Could we but find it," we should see how all Nature's forms and shapes hold Beauty. (lxxxvi.)

* * * *

No matter if terms of reproach be thrown at him by the unbeliever, the Sufi quietly asks the philosophers :

"How often have ye not held up to the world a lantern without light?" And equally quiet he has silenced and confounded the "loquacious lot" by declaring that only by submission of the heart can we learn wisdom and come under the soothing influence of Beauty.

If he be asked: "Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?" he answers quickly: "The two are one! Alike the treasure and the casket." Beauty teaches that lesson. (lxxxvii.)

* * * *

The Sufi can see the humour of things. He ever loves the wag; drollery is not unwelcome. "He is a good fellow, and 't will all be well." But the Sufi himself is silent. He has learned that from the sun. Where is the sound of the last storm—gone! What did it teach? Noise and then—silence! Even loquacity is part of "the sorting, sifting and redistributing process of nature." But e'er long the Sufi calls out: "O Saki, give me that imperial bowl, Which opens the heart, exhilarates the soul."

And the Sufi returns to his meditations. He follows the direction of the Hadis, Tradition, which says: "Think on the mercies of God, not on the essence of God." The Wine-Wisdom makes the *introrsum ascendere* a fact.

"Wine, the torch and beauty are epiphanies of Verity,
For it is that which is revealed under all forms soever."

For it is as Lahiji explained: "Wine is the rapture which makes the Sufi beside himself at the apparition of the Beloved; the Torch, the Light, kindled in his heart; and Beauty, the Truth itself manifested and present." (lxxxviii.-lxxxix.)

The Sufi may also let those talk who want to talk ; but he himself goes out to solitude as did the Persians before him. They went to the moon for "light and goodness." The Sufi does not "bend to the moon," however. The moon has Wine for him and the Beauty of the night. (xc.)

* * * *

Even when going to sleep in the so-called death, the Sufi insists upon retaining the character of life. He asks

" . . . lay me, shrouded in the *living* leaf,
By some not *unfrequented* garden-side."

How could a Truth-man act otherwise? And why should he not continue to bear witness? Do not all the Sufis do it? Are we not to-day intoxicated by the Wine-Wisdom of those gone before?

The world does not understand our intoxication and never did. We care not for the condemnation heaped upon us. When the world is intoxicated it is sullied in mind. When the Sufi is intoxicated he is a "Soul of Soul." "Souls of God" are defined by Maruf-al-Karkhi as being known by three signs: "Their Thought is of God; their Dwelling is with God; and their Business is in God."

The world is *blind*, hence its degrading intoxication. Abu Suleiman al-Darami has left us this Marifat (Gnosis): "None refrains from the lusts of this world save him in whose heart there is a light which keeps him always busied with the next world."

The Sufi asks for a "living leaf": a leaf from "the tree of life." The Lord of Life should not be worshipped with faded flowers nor should his representative the Sufi be buried with such. It is a beautiful custom and true

to pure sentiment that those who lie on the bier should rest among flowers from their own gardens: their own self.

The Sufi is a pilgrim in life, hence it is but proper that he be laid "by some not unfrequented garden-side," a place where other pilgrims pass and continue to pass. He can thus continue to witness to Beauty: the Beauty of the Garden! Moreover his interior illumination continues to shine over his tomb dissolving the illusions which Death weaves. Occasionally he may make use of echoes and shadows among the living and thus be personally present. (xci.)

* * * *

The Sandal tree sheds perfume upon the axe which cuts it down. The ashes of the Sufi sing Hallelujahs at burial. They are not "ashes to ashes." They are his artistic tools; pen and brush, compasses, paint, etc. They "fling up into the air" such vintage that "not a True-believer passing by, but shall be overtaken unaware."

That "vintage" is not an illusion. Persia, the land of the original Sufi, is the land of roses and jasmin. Nevertheless, where you travel you breathe an air still scenting fire-worship and ancient aromatic spirit-essences. On Cathedral lofty vaults the open eye often spies mystic designs left there by the intensity of a prayer. The battle-smoke still hangs over many an ancient battle-ground.

The Sufi is Love's devotee. That is why he is related to the Fire-worshipper of old, the Gueber. The orthodox thereby refuses him a "robe of honour." But he cares not. The coat of the Dervish is better. It is not made of Cairene cloth, to be sure, but of tattered

raggs saturated with holiness and memories of lovefeasts.
 Much wine has been spilled upon it. (xcii.-xciv.)

* * * *

The discontented ones, those vexed because the universe does not operate according to their wishes and demands, complain

“ . . . that Spring should vanish with the rose !
 That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close !
 The nightingale that in the branches sang,
 Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows ? ”

But the Sufi does not complain or vex. He is himself a bird of passage. But he does lament or bewail the fate of children and the immature. Their journey is so short that it does not seem possible for them to solve any of life's riddles. However, he empties his cup and cries : “ Let what will be, be.”

Again, malcontent exclaims: “ Would but the desert of the fountain yield one glimpse.” And this time it is both grumbling and blindness, because all holy books show the fountain, the fountain of youth, in the desert, and tell us that all deserts may be made fruitful lands by the Beloved, if we only would obey the cosmic laws, which are his will. There would be no crosses to bear, if we obeyed the laws of our life or stood in Truth of Life. The crosses arise when our path *crosses* the path of the Beloved.

Moreover deserts are not necessarily desolate and without evidence of the Beloved's presence. Some deserts are heaths and melancholy stretches of land, but the lark sings there and the bees love heather flowers. Others are prairies, but their monotone holds the voice of the Beloved. Others are sand and stones and subject

to storms and destructive tornadoes, etc., but they are awe-inspiring nevertheless. The Beloved is always present, directly or indirectly—"if dimly, yet indeed, revealed." (xcv.-xcvi.)

* * * *

At times the Sufi becomes impetuous and in his vehement aspirations he would "arrest the yet unfolded roll of fate." But this outburst of his is not a raving against "this sorry scheme of things" as the infidel calls the world order.

The "roll of fate" does not exist outside of the infidel's mind. The Beloved's will is not hard or cruel; it is none other than man's own personality, *and that can be changed*. Love is all there is; it is man's law and it is the law of the Beloved. Love unfolds man's personality little by little and transforms him into Love's pattern. This being so, is it any wonder that the Sufi wishes to be transformed and at times is impatient at what he thinks is delay. (xcviii.-xcix.)

* * * *

According to the customs of his environment, the Sufi thinks the New Moon means New Beginnings. Therefore he begins a New Life by talking no more about himself. He "turns down an empty glass"—he is "empty" of self! But he is full of Song and Wine, Beauty and the End. (c-ci.)

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